



Press Release

from the
CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

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Media Contact: Susan O'Brien, 443-482-2176 or 410-268-8816
sobrien@cbf.org

**Senator Sarbanes & NOAA announce \$878,000 in
environmental education grants to Bay programs**

Chesapeake Bay Foundation receives \$100,000 for teacher training program

(BALTIMORE, Md.) – The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF), along with 18 other programs throughout the Bay's watershed, today received a total of \$878,000 in environmental education grants from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). During today's ceremony at the Living Classrooms Foundation in Fells Point, U.S. Senator Paul Sarbanes (D-MD), U.S. Congressman Elijah Cummings (D-MD) and federal officials listened to several testimonials from students and teachers who have seen test scores rise and class participation increase as a result of hands-on, environmental education.

"For more than 30 years, CBF has been leading fieldtrips on the Chesapeake and its tributaries to provide a hands-on environmental education experience for more than 1.6 million students and teachers," said CBF President William C. Baker. "These federal funds are critical to leveraging the private support that is needed to connect all of our students – from Baltimore City to Norfolk, Virginia – with the Bay. Our \$100,000 grant will help include more teachers in our training program who can exponentially reach thousands more students. We thank Senator Sarbanes for helping create the federal funding program and the staff of NOAA for recognizing the importance of this truly unique bay-saving program."

Last fall, Congress approved the Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) Program, introduced by Senator Sarbanes, which expanded NOAA's budget to include the first-ever federal funding for environmental education programs in the Bay's watershed. According to a study conducted in 1999, when the environment is used as a tool to teach a wide range of subjects—including reading, science, math and social studies—student performance improves markedly and gaps in achievement across race and socioeconomic lines decrease.

"Developing an environmentally literate citizenry that has the skills and knowledge to make well-informed choices and to exercise the rights and responsibilities as members of a community is clearly one of the best ways to raise generations who can be contributors to a healthy and enduring Bay," said Senator Sarbanes. "With this funding to CBF's training program, we are helping teachers develop and deliver the best possible learning experience to their students about saving the Bay and protecting the environment."

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The grants, administered through NOAA's Chesapeake Bay Office, will provide environment-based education to students, teachers, and communities throughout the watershed. The goal is to bring the environment into every classroom and every child out into the bay watershed in a meaningful way.

"The Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries should be considered a living classroom," said Lowell Bahner, director of NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office. "The Bay provides a source of environmental knowledge that can be used to help advance student learning skills and problem-solving abilities across the entire school curriculum."

Last year, more than 40,000 students and adults participated in CBF's Field Education Program. In addition, nine Maryland schools are participating in CBF's Bay Schools Project. The project uses the local environment and the Bay as a context for learning in all subject areas, throughout the year, in order to increase student academic achievement and environmental stewardship. At today's ceremony, School 418 – W.E.B. DuBois High School (a CBF Bay School and formerly known as Northern High School) science teacher Ms. Joan Johnson and 11th grader Angel Paige delivered remarks about how when they use the Bay as a teaching tool, the students are more involved and achieve higher results.

"Environmental education of future generations is the key to the long-term effort to 'Save the Bay.' That is why I am so pleased that NOAA is joining as a key federal partner in our multi-faceted Chesapeake Bay education programs," said Rep. Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD), co-sponsor of the legislation to expand NOAA efforts to restore the Chesapeake Bay.

This year's 19 grant recipients were selected based on criteria that parallel the Chesapeake 2000 agreement. The agreement calls on bay states and the District of Columbia to combine efforts in ensuring that students receive a "meaningful" bay or stream outdoor experience before they graduate. The criteria emphasize sustained, hands-on, multi-disciplinary environmental experiences that are aligned with academic learning standards.

Selected projects total \$878,000 and range from investigating current Chesapeake Bay fishery issues to stream corridor restoration. Projects will take place in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Delaware, West Virginia and the District of Columbia. A complete list of projects awarded environmental education funds is attached.

Teachers or curriculum coordinators who are interested in participating in CBF's Teacher Training Institute or other bay education programs can contact Erin O'Neal at honeal@cbf.org or by calling 410-268-8816.

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation is the foremost conservation organization dedicated solely to saving the Chesapeake Bay. Its motto, Save the Bay, defines the organization's mission and commitment. With headquarters in Annapolis, Md., state offices in Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania, and a varied group of educational centers and programs, CBF works throughout the Chesapeake's 64,000-square-mile watershed. Founded in 1967, CBF is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization supported by more than 110,000 active members and has a staff of 150 full-time employees. Approximately 95 percent of CBF's \$19 million annual budget is privately raised.

2003 B-WET ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION GRANTS

MARYLAND

- NOAA awarded \$52,000 to the Friends of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Inc. Funding will provide a schoolyard habitat coordinator to promote and assist in implementing schoolyard habitat projects providing schools and teachers with unique, hands-on, integrated instructional opportunities to restore or create wildlife habitat on school grounds.
- NOAA awarded \$51,483 to Maryland State Department of Education to provide local school systems with teacher training workshops. These workshops will match state standards to local curriculum, establish background scientific knowledge and skills for a specific project, allow teachers to meet and interact with local professional resource personnel.
- NOAA awarded \$114,613 to the Living Classrooms Foundation to provide a project-based learning experience for students that is centered on the question, "What is storm water runoff pollution, and how can we help prevent it?" Throughout the program, students will work within their own neighborhoods and schoolyards to investigate this important urban environmental issue, to examine their own attitudes and behaviors, and to seek solutions to this problem.
- NOAA awarded \$35,245 to the National Aquarium in Baltimore to develop a meaningful service learning opportunity for inner-city school students. The program will provide students and teachers practical investigative experience using a horticultural experiment to grow tidal wetland plants for multiple community-based restoration projects.
- NOAA awarded \$35,000 to the Alice Ferguson Foundation, Inc. to provide teachers within Prince George's County the opportunity to participate in the Hard Bargain Farm Environmental Education Center. The greater watershed community benefits from the extension of environmental education to the inner-city, challenging youth to forge solutions to real environmental problems.
- NOAA awarded \$12,882 to Crossland High School to provide students with first-hand experience of the components of a watershed, from the tributaries in the local neighborhood, down stream to the rivers of the Chesapeake Bay. The students will investigate how the hydrologic cycle is applied to natural and developed landscapes and design their own solutions to managing urban storm water runoff on their campus school grounds.
- NOAA awarded \$3,149 to the Kent County Soil and Water Conservation District to provide students within Kent County the opportunity to participate in the Kent County Envirothon. The Envirothon is a problem-solving natural resource competition for high school students, which consists of four infield training sessions culminating in a one-day competition.
- NOAA awarded \$6,500 to the Mars Estates Elementary School to allow students to interact with the environment through hands-on experiences, reading and writing in order to build background knowledge, develop scientific research skills and improve achievement in science.

PENNSYLVANIA

- NOAA awarded \$70,000 to the Pennsylvania Department of Education to train teachers throughout Pennsylvania in environment and ecology mandated standards.
- NOAA awarded \$5,037 to the Keystone Central School District Central Mountain High School Science Department to expose all ninth grade biology students in Keystone School District to an outdoor environmental experience. Each student will use hands-on activities to explore a stream or wetland in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

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VIRGINIA

- NOAA awarded \$70,000 to the Virginia Resource Use Education Council to establish a high quality, highly visible and accessible teacher training "academy" across Virginia. The project will feature a series of

training opportunities that provide both content and direct experience for teachers in Virginia.

- NOAA awarded \$25,000 to the Friends of the Rappahannock to provide sixth and seventh-grade students with an intensive, long-term, hands-on experience that drives home important environmental concepts. The students will integrate the monitoring of their nursery into class projects, and receive intensive training (both in-class and in the field) on the role of riparian buffers, and on how to design an effective stream restoration project.
- NOAA awarded \$73,000 to the Virginia Marine Science Museum Foundation to provide an array of educational experiences for fourth-grade students. The goals of this project are to increase student knowledge of Chesapeake Bay ecology, to help students achieve higher academic success in science, and to develop champions for the Chesapeake Bay.
- NOAA awarded \$10,636 to the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences to provide the opportunity for motivated and interested high school students to investigate timely and pertinent issues in the Chesapeake Bay, such as the blue crab fishery or the state of the Eastern oyster.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

- NOAA awarded \$35,000 to the Earth Conservation Corps to provide students, teachers and the local community with day-long trips to the Kingman island where they will engage in dynamic hands-on environmental education activities focusing on river ecology, native wildlife and biodiversity conservation of the Anacostia River and the greater Chesapeake Bay watershed. The innovative curriculum combines environmental science, social studies, and African American history as part of the hands-on environmental education experience.
- NOAA awarded \$100,000 to the District of Columbia Department of Health to provide meaningful bay or stream experiences to District of Columbia high school students. Working through each of the six partners, D.C. high school students will be exposed to earth science, chemistry and life science in analyzing the Potomac or Anacostia watershed both in the classroom and in the field.

CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED

- NOAA awarded \$100,000 to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) to expand CBF's Teacher Training Institute. The Institute will provide teachers with the skills, knowledge, and comfort level necessary to integrate lessons and projects focused on the local watershed into their classrooms.
- NOAA awarded \$62,353 to the National Audubon Society for a student program that will teach the fundamentals of birdwatching and fishing in context with Maryland-D.C. science education curriculum and the Maryland High School Core Learning Goals. The program will culminate by engaging students in a mentoring program to transfer their new skills and knowledge to a younger class.
- NOAA awarded \$15,854 to the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science to provide teachers with a course that offers a unique opportunity to integrate university-based research and data with the Chesapeake Bay 2000 agreement.

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